

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Allowable Subject Matter

The allowance of claims 72-80 and the indicated allowability of claim 71 is noted with appreciation.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 29, 30, 39 and 71 stand rejected because of alleged indefiniteness. In order to render moot any issue of indefiniteness, claim 29 has been amended by changing "second material" to "conductive material", claim 39 has been cancelled, and claim 71 has been amended to refer to "the overcoat layer" instead of to "the first overcoat layer". Regarding claim 30, the Examiner's attention is invited to FIG. 2F wherein the illustrated semiconductor structure includes an air gap that has a height that exceeds the height of an adjacent conductive line.

Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 28, 29 and 52 stand rejected as anticipated by Kaanta et al. The rejection is now moot in view of amendments made to these claims. In particular, claim 28 has been amended to specify that the at least one solid layer is free of any closed holes contiguous with the closed interior volume. In contrast, the structure disclosed in Kaanta et al. includes a cap that necessarily has filled openings 22 contiguous with the spaces 25. See column 3, lines 17-45, and column 5, lines 20-63.

Similarly, claim 29 has been amended to specify that the overcoat layer is free of any closed holes contiguous with the air gap or gaps, and claim 52 has been amended to specify the solid layer is free of any closed holes contiguous with the closed interior volumes.

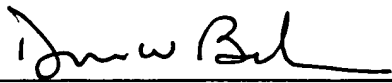
Withdrawal of the art rejections is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

An Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted herewith in order to make of record U.S. Patent No. 6,376,330.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

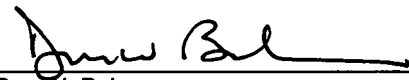
By 
Don W. Bulson, Reg. No. 28,192

1621 Euclid Avenue
Nineteenth Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 621-1113

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR 1.8a)

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper or thing referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Date: November 8, 2004


Don W. Bulson

R:\PRMS\PI\P0285\PI0285USB.R01.wpd